

many diseases. These remedies are all to be found in the varied flora of that great region. I have been shown recently specimens of "Indian snuff," much used by the Indians of the Rocky Mountain regions for nasal and related forms of catarrh. Two plants here go by the appellation of "Indian snuff." One is *Anemone cylindrica* and the other is *Anemone multifida*. The leaves of the plants are the part used. These are gathered before the seeds are quite ripe. They are dried and reduced to a fine powder. This powder is used just as the snuff of commerce. It produces quite a stinging sensation, makes the eyes water, and taken in sufficient quantity induces violent fits of sneezing. When these unpleasant effects have subsided, the throat and nostrils of affected persons become free and have a "comfortable feeling." The leaves are also broken small and smoked, as cubebs, and the smoke is expelled through the nostrils for the same purpose. The juice of fresh leaves is hot to the taste, and is sometimes rubbed into the nostrils instead of "snuffing."—F. W. ANDERSON, *Great Falls, Montana*.

EDITORIAL.

THE GAZETTE has again and again spoken of the importance of an investigator consulting the literature of the subject that he is at work upon. There is still such a crying need of this sort of application that at the risk of being tiresome we propose to speak of it again.

The establishment of the agricultural experiment stations has put upon many the necessity of performing some kind of experimental work who have either had little previous training in such work, or are mentally not adapted to it. Professor Sanborn says truly:¹ "I may say, speaking of the experiment stations, that many of us will always be more or less imitators. There are but very few original thinkers and workers. * * * * The majority of men take some problem partly solved and work along that line. There are very few men in this country that lay out original lines, but these few have plenty of imitators." Now it behooves those who are following some line suggested by another's work, and especially those who are taking the partly solved problems and working at them, to know *accurately* what has been done before. For the failure to find this out two excuses are given; first, that the literature is not accessible; second, that the busy experimenter has not time. The first is somewhat of a justification; the second is utterly puerile. The difficulty caused by the inaccessibility of literature is to be overcome in two ways. In equipping the stations the library should be considered as indispensable as the laboratory. "Jahresberichts" and similar summaries *must be*

¹ At the second annual convention of Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations; Proceedings, p. 59.

provided if possible. If, for any reason, this is not done, the investigator must find out where such systematic abstracts can be consulted, and, either by personal visitation or by hiring some one to examine them, discover what has been done.

It is a fair presumption, and one that ought always be made in the absence of knowledge to the contrary, that every subject has been worked at before by somebody, and no one is justified in publishing a piece of work until he has assured himself that what he is about to publish contains something worth setting forth.

Such a position as this does not preclude the publication of bulletins of information by the experiment stations, for a vast deal that is well known to specialists is not known at all to those whom it would directly benefit. It *does* preclude the publication of detailed experiments on ground already well trodden, unless these approach the matter in some new way or point to some different conclusions.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

Minor Notices.

PROFESSOR E. S. GOFF has prepared a paper on the Noxious Weeds of Wisconsin, which forms Bulletin 20 of the Agricultural Experiment Station.¹ It contains a copy of the weed law of the state, which requires the destruction of the following plants under penalties: *Cnicus arvensis*, *Arctium Lappa*, *Chrysanthemum Leucanthemum*, *Linaria vulgaris*, *Xanthium strumarium*, *Sonchus arvensis* and *Rumex crispus*. Descriptions and illustrations of all except *Sonchus arvensis* are accompanied by illustrations of several other bad weeds which are not included in the law.

NOTHING DOES MORE to stimulate study of any group of plants than providing beginners with suitable keys for the determination of the plants that they collect. Professor Underwood and Mr. Cook are about to issue a century of illustrative fungi, and they have prepared a series of keys to the genera of the Basidiomycetes and Myxomycetes to accompany the set.² These certainly must prove extremely helpful to those for whom they are intended. Of the specimens, fifty nine are Basidiomycetes, twenty-six Ascomycetes, eight Phycomycetes and seven Myxomycetes.

PROFESSOR BAILEY has been conducting a series of careful experiments on the germination of seeds, the results of which are embodied in

¹ Pp. 27, figs. 14. Published by the State.

² UNDERWOOD, L. M. and COOK, O. F.—Generic synopses of the Basidiomycetes and Myxomycetes. pp. 21. The authors, Syracuse, 1889.